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EPOCHS OF ENGLISH HISTORY

MODERN ENGLAND

1820—1885

BY

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LIST OF PRIME MINISTERS

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Mr. George Canning	April 1827	,,	Aug. 1827.
Lord Goderich	Aug. 1827	,,	Jan. 1828
Duke of Wellington	Jan. 1828	,,	Nov. 1830.
Lord Grey	Nov. 1830	,,	July 1834.
Lord Melbourne	July 1834	,,	Nov. 1834.
Sir Robert Peel	Dec. 1834	,,	April 1835.
Lord Melbourne	April 1835	,,	Aug. 1841.
Sir Robert Peel	Aug. 1841	,,	July 1846.
Lord John Russell	July 1846	,,	Feb. 1852.
Lord Derby	Feb. 1852	,,	Dec. 1852.
Lord Aberdeen	Dec. 1852	,,	Feb. 1855.
Lord Palmerston	Feb. 1855	,,	Feb. 1858.
Lord Derby	Feb. 1858	,,	June 1859.
Lord Palmerston	June 1859	,,	Nov. 1865.
Earl Russell	Nov. 1865	,,	June 1866.
Lord Derby	June 1866	,,	Feb. 1868.
Mr. Disraeli	Feb. 1868	,,	Dec. 1868.
Mr. Gladstone	Dec. 1868	,,	Feb. 1874.
Mr. Disraeli (the Earl of Beaconsfield)	Feb. 1874	,,	April 1880.
Mr. Gladstone	April 1880	,,	June 1885.

MODERN ENGLAND.

INTRODUCTION.

THE period of history contained in this little book is as important as any part of the annals of England. It is with few exceptions a time of peace, of quiet, steady internal progress. It represents a nation resting from the exertions of a mighty past to grow strong for the trials of a momentous future.

It is the genius of England to gain by reform what other nations attempt by revolution.

It was one of the effects of the French Revolution to destroy what remained of the feudal system in France; to strengthen the national life by summoning the whole nation to council; to establish liberty and equality. What France imperfectly attained by one fierce struggle England successfully acquired by the patient efforts of fifty years.

The chief events which mark the advance of this progress were these:

1. In 1829 the emancipation of the Catholics reconciled an ancient feud, and led the way to a wider toleration of religion.

2. In 1832 the great reform bill shook the monopoly of aristocratic government, abolished distinctions of class, and prepared the nation for a just and tempered democracy.

3. In 1846 the repeal of the Corn Laws secured cheap food for the working classes, and asserted the principle of free trade.

4. In 1851 and 1862 the nations of the world met in peaceful rivalry as the guests of England. The Crimean war between 1854 and 1856 did not seriously affect the regular march of progress.

5. In 1866 a new reform bill, in many respects the continuation of the old one, gave a new opportunity for internal improvement. Two large measures were passed with a view to give peace to Ireland, and a step was taken towards providing a national education.

These changes have all followed quietly and naturally one upon another, so that they look like growth rather than change.

At the end of this period England is ready with renewed strength to run a fresh career of prosperity and honour.

BOOK I.

CANNING.—1820–1827.

CHAPTER I.

THE QUEEN'S TRIAL.

1. YOU were told at the end of your last epoch that the reign of George III. closed in a time of sullen agitation, the result partly of the usual distress caused by a long war, partly of the delay in passing needful measures of reform.[1] Our epoch, therefore, opens dark and gloomily. We find the ministers so unpopular that a conspiracy is formed to murder them. We find the crown discredited by the bad character of the King, and the people ready to take part against him. The horror of the Cato Street conspiracy is explained by the scandal of the Queen's trial.

2. Let us hear what this conspiracy was. One day, towards the end of February 1820, the Cabinet ministers were to dine together at Lord Harrowby's. But they had been told that a plot had been formed by some desperate men to murder them as they sat at table. They therefore dined separately at home, while the police were sent to capture the conspirators. They found them, twenty-five in number, in a loft above a stable in Cato Street, Edgware Road, armed, and ready for the enterprise. The first of the police who entered was stabbed to the heart, and the greater number of culprits escaped, including Thistlewood, the captain of the gang, who, however, was taken next day.

Cato Street conspiracy.

[1] Epoch VII. p. 91.

On May 1 he was executed with four others, while five more were transported for life. Terror spread throughout the kingdom. Nothing, it was said, could be compared with this atrocity except the Gunpowder Plot in the reign of James I. It was attributed to the Radical Reformers, and the name of Radical became a byword. It was only the work of a few; yet misery and discontent must have risen to a high pitch before such remedies could have been thought of.

3. George III. had become unfit through illness to perform his duties as king at the end of the year 1810. His son George, Prince of Wales, was made Regent, and held the office till his father's death in the beginning of 1820, after which he succeeded to the throne. The trial of Queen Caroline, wife of the new king, tended still more to widen the breach between the people on one side, and the king and ministers on the other. She was a Princess of Brunswick, and had married the Prince of Wales in 1795. From the first he treated her with dislike, and she withdrew from England in 1814, as soon as peace made it possible for her to travel on the Continent. On the accession of her husband to the throne she was refused the title and honours of a queen; her name was omitted from its place in the prayer-book, and she was not received at foreign courts. Goaded by these insults she came to England to claim her rights. She was received with enthusiasm by the people. Crowds of supporters thronged her house and attended her carriage. The ministers, at the bidding of the king, introduced a bill to deprive her of her rank and to dissolve her marriage. The bill failed, and was withdrawn, and London was illuminated for three nights. Parliament granted her an annuity of £50,000, but no place was provided for her at the coronation of the king. On the morning of that day she attempted to force her way into Westminster Abbey, *but was repulsed,* and died a few days afterwards.

The Queen's trial.

CHAPTER II.

FOREIGN POLICY.

1. WE must now consider the position of England in connection with the other nations of Europe. After the defeat of Napoleon the allied sovereigns who met at the Congress of Vienna, attempted to do away with all traces of his work. The Emperors of Russia and Austria, the Kings of Prussia, France, and Spain, indeed, nearly all the European powers, except England, formed what was called the Holy Alliance. The object which it put forward was that of promoting peace and good-will among nations upon the basis of Christianity, but its real effect was to crush attempts to establish self-government throughout Europe. Napoleon had driven out the Bourbon kings from Spain and Naples; he had destroyed the Holy Roman Empire, and weakened the Papacy; he had been the enemy of all the old governments which were hostile to progress. The efforts of European statesmen were devoted to undoing all that he had done. During the six years which succeeded his fall Europe was disturbed by conspiracies and plots. These were mainly caused by the measures taken by governments to repress their subjects in their aspirations for freedom. Lord Londonderry, better known as Lord Castlereagh, who managed foreign affairs in England, had shown himself too favourable to the policy which Prince Metternich, the prime minister of Austria, had done most to form. In August 1822, however, Castlereagh died by his own hand, and Canning, who was just preparing to sail as governor-general to India, became foreign secretary in his place.

The Holy Alliance.

2. Insurrection had broken out in Spain. The Liberals set up a new constitution, and secured the person of the king. The partisans of absolute government and of the Catholic religion

Insurrections in Spain and Naples.

marched into Catalonia under the name of the Army of Faith. The French troops, under the plea of protecting their country against a contagion of fever, occupied the passes of the Pyrenees. They however soon crossed the frontier and, uniting with the absolutists, succeeded in quelling the rebellion. A similar outbreak had occurred a short time before in Naples and in Piedmont.

3. Part of the same wave of feeling had caused the Greeks to throw off the Turkish yoke. This attempt met with much sympathy in Europe, for when men thought of what the old Greeks had done for freedom, they wished that their descendants might succeed in gaining it. England could not give open help, but her feelings were shown without concealment to be on the side of the struggling power. The poet Shelley wrote and the poet Byron died for the awakened freedom of the land to which poetry owes so much. The Greeks fought well and bravely against the Turks, who could not put down their rising foe.

Insurrection in Greece.

4. A congress of European powers was summoned to meet at Verona in the north of Italy, in 1822, apparently for the purpose of discussing the affairs of Greece. It was attended by the Duke of Wellington as representive of England. As soon as it was suggested by the other powers that a general interference should be made to crush the rising in Spain, he refused to take any further part in the matter, and retired from the conference. Canning recognised the independence of the colonies in South America which had revolted from Spain. He called, as he said, a New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old. At a later period he sent troops to protect the liberties of Portugal against France. In this manner England showed that *she had definitely* broken with the principles of the Holy *Alliance.*

Canning's policy.

CHAPTER III.

COMMERCIAL REFORM.

1. THE conclusion of the war against Napoleon had left England in great distress. She had borne the expense not only of her own armament, but of the armaments of foreign nations. The national debt amounted to nearly 800 millions, and the money required for the struggle in which the nation was engaged had been borrowed most wastefully. In 1823 Huskisson became President of the Board of Trade. He was, like Canning, sneered at for being an adventurer. In other words he did not belong to one of those families who were considered at that time to have the right to keep the government entirely in their own hands. He was thoroughly versed in the principles of political economy—that is, in knowledge of the laws under which wealth is produced and distributed; and he used his position to pass a number of measures which rapidly developed the resources of the realm.

Financial condition of England.

2. A law had been enacted during the time of the Commonwealth, which was ratified by Charles II., forbidding, with some exceptions, that foreign produce should be brought into England by any but English ships. The effect of this had been to give to England the carrying trade of Europe and to take it away from the Dutch—that is, to enrich English merchants with all the profits of carrying foreign goods. Other nations had objected to this, and America in particular placed so high a duty on goods imported in English vessels that it practically prevented the trade from continuing. English ships used to go empty to America *to fetch American* goods, and American ships, after *bringing their own* goods to us, went away empty them

Navigation laws.

selves. The price of freight was thus doubled on both sides. To remedy this evil Huskisson proposed and carried, in 1823, a Reciprocity of Duties Bill, by which duties were made equal on all goods, whether brought in English or foreign vessels. Our shipping trade, which had been much depressed, was thus very largely increased.

3. There were also large duties levied on the importation of foreign silk. This did great injury to our silk weavers, partly by depriving them of the materials of their labour, partly by removing the stimulus of healthy competition. French silks were everywhere preferred to English, and so great was the rage for smuggled goods that it even paid an English manufacturer to have his own goods smuggled into England under the name of French. The prohibition of foreign wool was equally injurious. Much English wool could only be used when mixed with foreign. All change was resisted both by manufacturers and operatives. But Huskisson was assured of the truth of his principles, and carried measures which reduced the duties on both these articles.

Silk and wool.

4. The question of the abolition of slavery was still unsettled. Like many other reforms it had been brought forward, and encouraged by Wilberforce and Pitt, but had been laid aside in the throes of the European struggle. Our West Indian colonies were full of slaves, and scenes were enacted in them as terrible as any we have since heard of in America. Yet slavery could not be abolished without heavy loss of money. Indeed it was feared that the blacks might rise and bring about a general massacre. A bill was passed to mitigate the sufferings of the slaves, and all slaveholders knew that by this small measure the death-blow of slavery had been struck.

Slavery.

5. Under the influence of these measures the prosperity of the country largely increased. Wealth began to flow

into new channels, and all classes of the people felt in their daily lives how far preferable peace was to war. Only the change was too sudden. The country ran into wild speculation. Companies were formed for objects impossible to obtain. Banks were opened by men who had no capital to support them. A crash came in 1825. Riots broke out in the Midland Counties; machines were broken as the supposed cause of the people's misery. The Government came to the rescue; money was lent to merchants to retrieve their fortunes; foreign corn was let out of the docks, and the panic passed away.

Commercial distress.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DEATH OF CANNING.

1. TWO great questions remained for settlement, the Corn laws, and the Catholic disabilities. The Catholic population of Ireland was four times as great as the Protestant. The Catholics had for more than a century and a half been treated as a conquered and down-trodden race. In many respects their position had been improved, yet even in 1828, no Catholic could sit in either house of Parliament, no Catholic could be guardian to a Protestant, or keep any arms or warlike stores. The Catholics were excluded from almost every office of trust or distinction, and were made in many ways to feel that they stood on a different social footing to the Protestants. In 1800, when Ireland was united with England, Pitt had promised to remedy their grievances. But the King pleaded his coronation oath, and his mind gave way when the question was pressed upon him. It

Catholic Question.

was felt that nothing could be done as long as George III. lived. Canning had devoted himself to this cause from his earliest years. But the matter remained an open question with the ministry, and it would probably have remained so much longer had it not been for the efforts of the Catholic Association under Daniel O'Connell. A Relief Bill passed the House of Commons in 1825, but was defeated in the House of Lords, by the efforts of the Duke of York, the next heir to the throne, who declared his unflinching hostility to any measure of this kind so long as he lived.

2. He did not live long, but died in January 1827. Lord Liverpool was soon afterwards struck down by paralysis, and Canning was reluctantly summoned by the sovereign to form a ministry. He had already received his death-blow in attending the Duke of York's funeral on a cold winter's night in St. George's Chapel. The Duke of Wellington, Peel, and Lord Eldon, declined to serve under him. His principal colleague was Huskisson. His ministry was pledged to remove the two crying evils of the time. A Corn Bill intended to redeem part of this pledge was rejected in the House of Lords. Canning had no time to put into execution the cherished purpose of his life.

Canning Prime Minister.

3. Worn out by the exertions of his office, disheartened by the desertion of his friends, harassed by the constant persecution of an unscrupulous opposition like that which had embittered the last days of Pitt, he sank under his accumulated burdens, and died in August 1827, at the age of 57. He has left a name second to none on the roll of English statesmen. His policy was not bounded by the limits of his country. His heart was ever moved with indignation against oppression. He vindicated the position of England as the asserter of liberty and freedom throughout the world.

His death.

BOOK II.

WELLINGTON.—1827–1830.

CHAPTER I.

WELLINGTON PRIME MINISTER.

1. THE King had hoped to keep the same ministry in office and to carry on public business with as little change as possible. Lord Goderich, who was considered a moderate man, was therefore made prime minister, but Mr. Herries and the Duke of Wellington, who were both Tories, were members of the Government. This was enough to bring about its destruction. A quarrel broke out between Herries and Huskisson, and Lord Goderich not wishing to get rid of either of them preferred to resign himself. The administration had scarcely lasted six months.

Lord Goderich Prime Minister.

2. His place was taken by the Duke of Wellington (January 1828), now in his sixtieth year, the first subject of the Crown, accepted in all parts of Europe as the representative of English power and English spirit, but destined to impair in office the reputation he had gained in war. His industry, courage, and integrity were beyond question, but he had little sympathy with the people, and was apt to base his conduct too exclusively on obedience to the authority of the Crown. Huskisson tried to convince himself that the spirit of Canning would yet continue to guide the conduct of the ministry, and therefore remained in office. But an opportunity soon occurred for removing him, and the remnant of Canning's party, Lord Dudley, Lord Palmerston, and Mr. Grant, joined him in his retirement.

Duke of Wellington Prime Minister.

CHAPTER II.

NAVARINO.

1. THE attention of Europe had now for six years been directed towards the East. The Greeks had continued their struggle for liberty with various fortunes. Russia took this opportunity to attack her hereditary foe, and was moving forward in her double mission of releasing her brother Christians from the Moslem yoke, and of establishing her power upon the Dardanelles. England and France were afraid that Russia, if left to herself, might forget her worthier objects in the satisfaction of her ambition, and they saw that the best hope of controlling her policy lay in sharing her designs.

Turkish Question.

2. To effect these objects Canning had, in July 1827, procured the signature of the Treaty of London between England, France, and Russia. The powers offered their mediation to establish peace between the two countries which had been so long at war. An armistice was to be concluded without delay. The Sultan was to retain the title of *Suzerain* or superior lord of Greece, and the Greeks were to pay a yearly tribute or *relief*; also a separation of the two nations, which were then intimately mixed, was to be effected, and the Turks were to be compensated for the territory which they surrendered. A secret article attached to the treaty provided that if the Porte or the Greeks did not accept the armistice within one month, the Powers should do their best to force it upon them without however taking an active part in the war.

Treaty of London.

3. The Turks refused to grant an armistice. Ibrahim Pasha, Viceroy of Egypt, sailed with a large fleet to assist the Sultan. The combined English, French, and Russian fleets allowed him to *enter the* Harbour of Navarino, on the west coast of the

Battle of Navarino.

Morea, on condition that he did not come out again. He broke his promise and was driven back, but took his revenge by harassing the country and burning villages. The allies saw the smoke from burning villages rising among the hills. They realised the misery of his victims, and their patience could hold out no longer. They sailed into the narrow strait at the entrance of the harbour with a view of forcing Ibrahim to discontinue these atrocities under penalty of the entire destruction of his fleet. A battle was not in their intention, but a random shot fired the train of angry feeling, the battle became general, and in four hours the Turkish fleet was entirely destroyed (October, 1827).

4. When the news of this victory arrived in England Canning was dead. Wellington was not so favourable to the independence of the Greeks. The king, at the opening of Parliament, spoke of Navarino as an 'untoward event;' and no effort was made to follow up the advantage gained over the Turks. The Russians took up with greater vigour the cause which they had more nearly at heart. One army crossed the Danube and the Balkans, another marched into Armenia and occupied Kars and Erzeroum. The treaty of Adrianople (August, 1829) secured the existence of Greece as an independent kingdom.

Kingdom of Greece.

CHAPTER III.

CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION.

1. THE Corporation and Test Acts, passed in the reign of Charles II., provided that no one should hold any important civil or military office without giving evidence that he was a member of the Church of England, by receiving the Holy Sacrament.

Corporation and Test Acts.

These Acts had been especially directed, the first against the Independents, the second against James II. and the Roman Catholics.[1] The burden of them now fell on the Dissenters who were, however, able to evade the prohibition enforced by them by an Act of Indemnity first passed in the reign of George II., and annually renewed. Lord John Russell proposed and carried, in 1828, a motion that a Committee should be appointed to consider the abolition of these galling and useless restrictions. Peel and Huskisson opposed the measure, as Canning had always done before, on the ground not of principle but of expediency. But they gave way to the feeling of the House, and a declaration of friendliness to the Church of England was substituted for the test.

2. This was followed by a new agitation in Ireland for the emancipation of Catholics. By the efforts of the Catholic Association O'Connell was elected member for Clare. His return was declared valid, although he could not sit and vote in the House until he had taken the prescribed oaths. The Catholic Association became more and more powerful. Supported by the priests and well furnished with money, it spread itself over the whole of Ireland. It professed to secure that no member should be elected for any Irish constituency who did not pledge himself to obtain emancipation for the Catholics and Parliamentary Reform. It became evident to the ministers that no course was left to them but to conciliate a power which they could not quell.

Election of O'Connell.

3. The king's speech on opening the session of 1829 contained the surprising announcement that the Catholic Association would be suppressed, and that a measure for the relief of the Catholics would be presented for the consideration of Parliament. Sir

Bill passed.

[1] See Epoch V. pp. 59, 64.

Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington had courageously sacrificed political consistency to the good of their country. A Bill which abolished all political distinctions between Catholics and Protestants in the fullest and most generous manner passed the Commons and Lords, and after a little hesitation received the assent of the king. The association which had obtained this victory in the name of a nation disappeared quietly out of existence. A great step had been made towards redressing the wrongs of Ireland.

4. O'Connell, who had deserved the gratitude of his country, was reluctant to give up the position of agitator. He declared that he would never rest until he had secured the repeal of the union between England and Ireland. In this vain and hopeless struggle he squandered the reputation which he had fairly earned, and came eventually to be regarded rather as a demagogue than as a patriot.

Agitation for repeal of Union.

CHAPTER IV.

EUROPEAN REVOLUTION.

1. THE discontent which existed in England was only part of a general feeling of uneasiness which overspread the Continent and took the form of a reaction against the arrangements of the Treaty of Vienna, and the repressive measures which succeeded it. In these disputes the sympathies of the English people were on one side; the sympathies of the Duke of Wellington were thought, with only too good reason, to be or the other. In Portugal, Don Miguel, brother of Don Pedro, the new Emperor of Brazil, had usurped the

Portugal.

throne which belonged to his niece Donna Maria, the daughter of Don Pedro. He overthrew the constitution which had been defended by Canning, and established a government supported by the priests and the nobility, and recognised by no powers but Rome and Spain. Donna Maria was received with honour in England, and ministers declared that they would observe the strictest neutrality; but it was evident that the feelings of the government were really with the party of absolute government, and our neutrality was so strictly interpreted that we attacked an expedition sent out to garrison an island which had remained faithful to the Queen Maria.

France. 2. France was the scene of far more serious disturbances. Louis XVIII., who had been restored to the throne after the fall of Napoleon, died in 1823, and was succeeded by his brother. This was the Count of Artois, whose frivolous youth had been spent among the dissipations of Versailles, in the years which preceded the French Revolution; he now, as Charles X., governed reluctantly as a constitutional king. In 1829 Prince Polignac, a strong royalist, and a friend of Wellington, joined the ministry. It was in a hopeless minority in the Chamber of Deputies, as the French House of Commons was called. After attempting in vain to pass some important measures, the Chamber was dissolved. The elections throughout the country were against the ministry, and placed it in a worse position than before. It determined to adopt a high-handed course, and issued in the king's name three ordinances, first to suspend the liberty of the press, secondly to dissolve the newly-elected chambers, and thirdly to alter their constitution. A revolution broke out, the fury of which made three days memorable in French History: the 27th, 28th, and 29th of July, 1830. The king, who was at St. Cloud, abdicated, *and retired to England.* Louis Philippe, son of Philippe

Duke of Orleans, who, in the first French Revolution, after voting for the King's death had himself perished by the guillotine, was first made Captain General and then King of the French. An impulse towards independence spread throughout Europe. Belgium separated itself from Holland, a country different in language, religion, and race. Poland attempted to recover its independence. It was seen how vain had been the efforts of the Treaty of Vienna to arrange the map of Europe without consulting the wishes of the people who were chiefly concerned.

3. Just before the outbreak of the Revolution in France, George IV. died (June, 1830). He was succeeded by the Duke of Clarence under the name of William IV., a popular sailor, deficient in regal qualities, but who was understood to sympathise with the people. Parliament was dissolved, as is usual, after the death of a sovereign. The new elections were most unfavourable to ministers. Brougham, a strong advocate for reform and education, the favourite of the populace, was returned for Yorkshire without expense. The king's speech announced a defiant attitude. It regarded with coldness the struggles on the Continent which roused so much sympathy in England, it breathed a determination to repress and crush all agitation throughout the country. This was followed shortly afterwards by a statement of the Duke of Wellington that he considered the reform of the representation entirely unnecessary, and that he should always resist it. His unpopularity became so great that the king's visit to the City was postponed lest public violence should be offered to the minister. At last the government were defeated, and resigned in November, 1830.

Wellington resigns.

BOOK III.

REFORM. 1830-1834.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST REFORM BILL.

1. LORD GREY was pointed out as the natural head of a ministry whose chief duty was to introduce a scheme of Parliamentary reform. He was now sixty-six years of age, and had made the same good cause his own thirty years before. The Cabinet of fourteen was composed of nine Whigs, whose long exclusion from office had made them less fit for the work of administration, and four remnants of the party of Canning. Lord Althorp was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Brougham, to the surprise of all men, became Lord Chancellor, and deserted the scene of his triumphs in the House of Commons. Lord Palmerston, as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, held different opinions to his colleagues. Lord Grey declared to the House which was then sitting that the principles of his government were reform, economy, order, and peace. Agitation still continued in England, but Ministers hoped to be able to allay it by the measure which four of their number were preparing in secrecy and silence.

Lord Grey Prime Minister.

2. In March 1831, Lord John Russell asked leave to introduce the first Reform Bill. The greatest excitement prevailed; heaps of petitions were piled upon the table, the House was crowded, dense masses of the people stood outside waiting for the news, *and beyond them* were horsemen ready to carry the first

Reform Bill introduced.

information of the details of the Bill to every part of England. The chief evils which demanded a remedy were: 1. The existence of *rotten boroughs*, places with few electors, and sometimes no inhabitants, which returned two members to Parliament. 2. The fact that large towns which had grown into importance through commerce were left without representation. 3. The unequal distribution of the franchise itself, so that only a small part of the population had the right of voting in elections. The Bill proposed that sixty of the smaller boroughs should be disfranchised altogether, that forty-seven should return only one member instead of two; on the other hand, London received eight additional representatives, and thirty-four seats were distributed among a number of towns hitherto unrepresented. The English counties had allotted to them fifty-five new members, the Scotch five, the Irish three, the Welsh one. In consequence of these changes the numbers of the House of Commons would be reduced from 658 to 596. Corporations in towns lost their exclusive right of election, and it was uniformly extended to all householders who paid £10 a year rent. This gave votes to half a million citizens who were before without them.

3. Lord John Russell's speech was received with derisive cheers and laughter, but Sir Robert Peel sat fixed and immovable in his place, and the Duke of Wellington told his friends in society 'that it was no joke, and there was nothing to laugh at.' The debate lasted seven nights, and brought out the conflicting objections of the Tories and the Radicals. The one thought such a reform, coupled with a free press, incompatible with the power of the crown and the independence of the Lords. 'It is a revolution,' said a Tory member. The Radicals recognised the boldness of the measure, but regretted that no mention was made of ballots, of shortened

Second Reading.

Parliaments, or of universal suffrage. At last, after a short reply from the opener of the debate, leave was given to bring in a Reform Bill, and it was read for the first time. The country was strangely divided. The Court, the House of Lords, the clergy, the army and navy, the universities, and the Inns of Court were mainly against the Bill; it was supported by the manufacturers and the body of the people. The press was generally in its favour. Excitement was at its highest when Lord John Russell proposed the second reading. After a debate of two nights the motion was carried by a majority of one, the numbers being 302 and 301. The success of the Bill seemed to be very doubtful.

4. After the Easter recess ministers announced some changes in the details of the Bill. General Gascoigne, in Committee, proposed that the number of the English and Welsh members should not be diminished. Lord Althorp declared that this motion would be fatal to the Bill. At four in the morning it was carried by a majority of eight. A dissolution was immediately resolved on, but kept secret for the present. On April 21, Ministers were again defeated by a majority of twenty-two. A Cabinet Council was held, orders were given for the attendance of the Officers of State and the royal guards, the King's consent was reluctantly obtained by Lord Grey and Lord Brougham. The King surprised both Houses in the midst of a debate, protesting against dissolution. Parliament was prorogued as a prelude to its dissolution, and the question of reform was left to the judgment of the country (April 1831).

Parliament Dissolved.

CHAPTER II.

SECOND REFORM BILL.

1. THE dissolution of Parliament was followed by general rejoicing and illuminations; those who refused to illuminate had their windows broken. In the elections reformers were chosen throughout the country; of the county members nearly all were pledged to support the Bill. The Second Reform Bill was introduced by Lord John Russell in July. It was the same as the first, with very few modifications. Leave to introduce it was granted with only one dissentient voice. The debate on the second reading lasted three nights. The motion was carried by a majority of 136, the numbers being 367 and 231. The Ministers had gained 135 votes by the dissolution. But the minority was united and determined. The motion to go into committee was met by repeated amendments. The House rose at half-past seven to sit again at three. In committee the case of each borough was separately discussed. It was urged that the Bill disfranchised the South of England for the benefit of the North, but it was in the North that the chief increase of wealth and population had taken place. Every art of obstruction was put in force. The House continued to sit through the tropical heat of July and past the 12th of August, and the work of the Committee was only just concluded before the coronation of the king in September The Bill finally passed the House of Commons by a majority of 106.

New Parliament.

Bill passes the Commons.

2. In October the second reading of the Bill was proposed in the House of Lords by Lord Grey. He defended

the consistency of his career, and showed that he had supported Pitt's proposals for Reform in 1786. The debate continued for five nights The Duke of Wellington opposed the Bill; Lord Lyndhurst, who had been a Tory Lord Chancellor, complained that it opened the flood-gates of democracy. The Chief Justice and the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke the sentiments of their professions in demanding its rejection Earl Grey replied on the morning of the 8th, but the Bill was rejected by a majority of 41.

Rejected by the Lords.

3. The indignation of the country was extreme. A spark might have produced a revolution. A cry was raised for the abolition of the House of Lords. Unpopular peers were attacked in the streets. A procession of 60,000 persons presented a petition to the King. Windows were broken in London, riots were common throughout the country. The public mind was calmed by Brougham and Russell. The people were assured that there was no intention to desert their cause or to shelve the question of Reform, but that repose was absolutely needed. Parliament was prorogued for a month. Even after this it was found necessary to prohibit political associations by proclamation. A terrible riot took place in Bristol, directed against the recorder Sir C. Wetherell, one of the fiercest opponents of the Bill. The constables were routed and soldiers were called in to quell the tumult. The prisons were broken open and the prisoners liberated, the mansion-house and the bishop's palace were burned to the ground. The riots were at last suppressed with great bloodshed and loss of life. Bishops were burned in effigy throughout England, and the Church was involved in the hatred inspired by its chiefs.

Riots.

CHAPTER III.

THIRD REFORM BILL.

1. PARLIAMENT met again in December, and the third Reform Bill was introduced. The chief alterations made in it were in adopting the census of 1831, as a basis of calculation for the population instead of that of 1821, and in maintaining the members of the House of Commons at the original number. The second reading was carried by a majority of 162, and in spite of attempts at delay, the Bill finally passed the Commons in March. Bill passes the Commons.

2. In the Upper House it was still violently opposed by the Duke of Wellington, whereas a party called the 'Waverers' or the 'Trimmers' represented by Lord Wharncliffe and Lord Harrowby were disposed to accede to the second reading in order to amend it in Committee. The Bill therefore passed through this stage by a majority of nine. In Committee an amendment of Lord Lyndhurst was adopted by a majority of thirty-five. The debate was immediately adjourned. The Lords.

3. Ministers had before them the choice between advising the King to create sufficient peers to ensure the passing of the Bill, or of resigning their offices. The King, whose early enthusiasm for the measure had gradually cooled, was reluctant to swamp the Upper House with new creations. So the ministry chose to resign. The Lords determined to proceed with the discussion of the Bill, the Commons prayed in an address to the throne that the measure passed by them might not be surrendered. The excitement throughout the country was more violent than ever. A union Ministry resigns.

was formed at Birmingham with the object of refusing to pay taxes. Arms were prepared, and there was even danger of a civil war. An attempt to form a ministry among the enemies of Reform failed. Lord Lyndhurst and Sir Robert Peel declined the post; the Duke of Wellington undertook it, only to find it impossible.

4. Lord Grey was recalled in May 1832; the King reluctantly gave permission to him and to Lord Brougham to create such a number of peers as would be necessary to pass the Bill, first calling up peers' eldest sons. In consequence of this the opposition of the Lords was suddenly withdrawn, the Waverers declaring that they had been duped and cheated. The Bill passed in June, only twenty-two peers voting against it. The amendments of the Lords were shortly afterwards accepted by the Commons, and the Bill became law. The King refused to give his consent in person, but it was given by commission amid the silence of deep emotion. Parliament was shortly afterwards dissolved, that a new House of Commons might be elected under the new Act.

Bill passes.

CHAPTER IV.

RESULTS OF THE REFORM BILL.

1. THE Reform Bill has not belied the prophecies of those who opposed it. It was a great revolution, as momentous though not so violent as the revolutions of France in 1789, and of England in 1688. Its consequences are still in the future. But although the change it brought was as complete as was predicted of it, its effects have been far from disastrous. It brought about by gradual and silent means the reforms which are

Reflections.

necessary to harmonise progress with stability, and new ideas with old traditions. It took a large step towards admitting the whole nation to the labours of government, and allowed the national life to flow in a fuller tide.

2. A spirit of moderation governed the elections. The attention of the new House of Commons, which met in January 1833, was first directed to Ireland. Riots and disturbances rendered it necessary to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act. When this had been done, it was possible to consider the wrongs of Ireland. The first act of the government was to remedy the abuses of the Irish Church. The number and salaries of the higher clergy were reduced, and an attempt made to diminish the injustice of the tithe, which often had to be collected at the point of the bayonet. New Parliament.

3. Retrenchment and financial reforms next claimed attention. Ministers felt bound to redeem their promises on the one hand, and to resist their extreme supporters on the other. The Government of India lost the exclusive right of trading, but their charter was renewed in other respects to their satisfaction. But by far the most important measure was the abolition of slavery in the British Empire. The victory so long striven for by Wilberforce, Stephen, and Clarkson was at last gained. The slaves were set free, at a great loss of property to their owners. Some attempt was made to alleviate the condition of factory-workmen at home, and a large grant was given for education. Such efforts are only possible when the feeling of the people is at a high pitch. Slavery abolished.

4. Parliament met for its Second Session in February 1834. It had first to deal with the affairs of Ireland. Some liberals wished to diminish still further the revenues of the Irish Church. O'Connell opposed any measure of political coercion. At last, worn out with anxiety and vexation, Lord Grey retired from a Second Session.

position which had long been wearisome to him. Lord Melbourne took his place, and the rest of the ministry continued unchanged.

5. The force with which ministers had met a reformed Parliament was exhausted. Attempts to give effect to the rest of the measures which had been promised ended in failure. Neither the Irish tithes nor the English poor rates could be placed on a satisfactory footing. The one success was the passing of the Bill to amend the poor law. By this act the law of settlement by which paupers were removed to the parish of their birth was abolished, workhouses were erected throughout the country, outdoor relief was greatly diminished, and the results were shown in a falling of rates, a rise of wages, and a rapid spread of happiness and contentment.

Lord Melbourne's first Ministry.

6. The popularity of the ministry was gone, but its fall was sudden. The King, after a hasty declaration in favour of the Irish Church, intimated to his ministers that they should resign. Sir Robert Peel, who was in Rome, was sent for in haste. In the meantime the Duke of Wellington held nearly all the offices of Government in his own hands. A new ministry was formed, and Parliament was dissolved to ascertain the feeling of the country, in December 1834.

Resignation.

BOOK IV.

LORD MELBOURNE. 1835–1841.

CHAPTER I.

SIR R. PEEL'S FIRST MINISTRY.

1. THE new Parliament still contained a majority of Whigs, although many seats, especially in the counties, had been won by the Tories. These old party names were now giving way to the terms Liberal and Conservative. Ministers were in a minority from the first, they were beaten in the election of speaker, and beaten on the address. Parliament was only restrained by fear of a dissolution. Sir R. Peel inaugurated several measures of the wisest character which were afterwards adopted by the opposition. He established an ecclesiastical commission, to equalise the income of the clergy; he tried to regulate the collection of tithes and the marriage of dissenters; he was beaten in detail, but his enemies shrank from proposing a vote of want of confidence. The new Parliament.

2. At last an issue was found in the question of the Irish Church, and the appropriation of some of its revenues to secular purposes. The ministry found itself in a minority of thirty-three, and soon after resigned. The king was compelled to recall Lord Melbourne, and the old ministry was restored with the exception of Lord Brougham. An attempt to force a Tory government on the nation by the authority of the sovereign thus signally failed. William IV. is more to be blamed for trying it than the Duke of Wellington and Sir R. Peel for supporting their sovereign. Ministry falls.

CHAPTER II.

THE KING'S LAST YEARS.

1. TWO great problems lay before the ministry, the reform of municipalities, and the reform of the Irish Church.

Municipal reform.

The government of boroughs, once the home of liberty and the training ground for political practice, had come to be as full of abuses as the representation of the country. Some town councils consisted of a great noble, the members of his family, and his chief man of business, and their sole function was to elect members to Parliament. Early in September, 1835, a measure was passed, with the concurrence of Lords and Commons, which rendered municipal government a reality, provided for the proper election of aldermen, abolished the unreasonable privileges of freemen, a class of men who by the accident of birth were invested with the government of the towns; and struck off the fetters from many industries. This measure completed and extended the work of the Reform Bill.

2. The grievances of Ireland still continued. During the last fifty years a number of political societies called

Ireland.

Orange Lodges had sprung up in the province of Ulster. Their object was to support the cause of Protestantism against the ribbon men, who were Catholics. The attempt to diminish the revenues of the Irish Church favoured the extension of these lodges. They spread throughout Ireland, England, and the colonies. Their members reached the number of 300,000, and the Duke of Cumberland, the king's brother, was placed at their head with almost despotic power. They were considered a menace to the peace of the kingdom and were quietly dissolved in 1836.

3. Opportunity was taken for carrying a number of

domestic reforms. A uniform registration of births, deaths, and marriages was ordered throughout the kingdom; the revenues of bishops and canons were equalised in pursuance of the report of the Ecclesiastical Commission; the tax on newspapers was reduced to a penny in spite of the opposition of the Tories, who preferred cheap soap to a cheap press. Domestic reforms.

4. The power of the Ministry did not last much longer. Deserted by some old allies, they failed to carry measures of further improvement. Discredited by repeated defeats, they would have resigned if it had not been for the illness and death of the king. This took place in June, 1837. William IV. was honest and conscientious. His reign witnessed a great revolution in the Reform Bill, and a strong impulse to commerce by the extension of railways and growth of steamships. With good reason his statue adorns the passage of the Houses of Parliament as representing a time when the national progress was unusually rapid. King dies.

CHAPTER III.

THE NEW REIGN.

1. NO monarch ever came to the throne more popular than Queen Victoria, the daughter of the Duke of Kent, just eighteen years old. Her youth secured sympathy; her conduct soon won for her affection and respect. Consideration for her feelings kept the ministers in power, as the nation did not wish to deprive her of advisers whom she was understood to like. To the joy of Englishmen Hanover was separated from the crown by passing to a male heir. An outbreak in Canada threatened to become serious, and the first The Queen.

measures of the new reign were directed to the suppression of rebellion.

2. Discontent in Canada arising from disputes between the French and English Canadians had been fostered by the United States. Major Head, governor of Upper Canada, sent away the soldiers, called out the militia and loyal inhabitants, and entirely crushed the rebels. He was reprimanded and recalled. Lord Durham, a man of the highest character, was sent out to appease the province. Nothing could be more heroic than his performance of duty, while he was slowly wasting with incurable disease and thwarted by factious opposition. He failed in the object of his mission, and came home to die.

Canada.

3. The Ministry continued to exist on sufferance. They had no power to carry measures or to support their servants. In May, 1839, they were defeated in a question about Jamaica. They resigned; but Sir R. Peel made it a condition of taking office that a change should be made in the ladies of the Queen's bedchamber. The Queen objected, and the ministry remained in their posts; but it has since been held that the chief officers who surround the person of the sovereign are changed with a change of ministry.

Bedchamber question.

4. The same year saw the introduction of penny postage, the invention of Rowland Hill. At this time no postage was under 2*d.* Letters from the country to London cost from 6*d.* to 1*s.*; from Scotland to Ireland 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* Rowland Hill showed that the actual cost of carrying each letter was very small, and that if a stimulus was given the traffic would increase enormously. Experience has endorsed this, and cheap postage has been adopted by all civilised nations. Postage stamps were also introduced, and franking, the privilege of sending letters free of postage reserved to *members of Parli*ament, was abolished.

Penny post.

CHAPTER IV.

THE QUEEN'S MARRIAGE.

1. STATESMEN had long been occupied with the question of the queen's marriage; none more so than the king of the Belgians, uncle of the Queen, himself the widower of a princess who was heir to the English throne. Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg Gotha, the Queen's first cousin, had been silently educated for his destinies. The marriage, which took place in Feb. 1840, was happily one of love. The prince's virtues formed the real foundation of the prosperity of the reign, and it will be recognised by posterity that his many-sided culture and intellectual activity have left an indelible stamp on the minds and character of Englishmen. The best results of German thought were transfused into English manliness, an effect which the union with Hanover had never been able to accomplish. Prince Albert.

2. The government regained some little strength by its activity in crushing the attempt of Egypt to revolt from the Porte. But they were not able to pass measures of importance, and the debates on the budget overthrew them. They were defeated in a measure which anticipated the repeal of the corn laws. Instead of resigning, they dissolved Parliament in June 1841. But the country ratified the judgment of the House, and after the election the Conservatives divided on the address with a majority of 91. A new ministry was formed, of which the principal members were Sir R. Peel and the Duke of Wellington. Ministers resign.

BOOK V.

SIR ROBERT PEEL. 1841–1853.

CHAPTER I.

AFGHANISTAN.

1. SIR R. PEEL, at the outset of his ministry, found himself compelled to provide for a deficiency of revenue of two millions and a half, and to take at least some steps in the direction of free trade in corn. At this time the poor were paying a large price for their daily bread in order that the farmers of England might derive a supposed advantage of profit, while quantities of corn from the Baltic and the Black Sea were kept out of England by an unreasonable duty. The prime minister proposed an alteration of what was called the sliding scale—that is, a set of duties varying with the price of corn in the English market—his object being to maintain the price of wheat as nearly as possible at sixty shillings. A motion for the repeal of the corn laws was made by the leaders of the Anti-Corn-Law League, Cobden and Villiers. It was lost by a large majority, and the government proposals were easily carried.

Corn Laws.

2. The deficiency in the revenue was made worse by the outbreak of a war in China and the possibility of troubles on the Indian frontier. Sir R. Peel determined to deal with the whole matter comprehensively, and began that series of financial reforms which, continued by his pupil, Mr. Gladstone, have done much to raise England to her present height of prosperity. The chief source of proposed revenue was the income tax, at

Income Tax.

that time new and violently opposed, but which has since been found a powerful engine in times of difficulty. Besides this, he revised the whole tariff of imports, simplifying them wherever it was possible, and preparing the way for free trade. At this time a penny income tax produced three-quarters of a million revenue; it now produces a million and a half.

3. Afghanistan, a province on the north-western frontier of India, is approached by two passes from the plains. The Khyber Pass, a long and difficult defile, leads to Jellalabad, and the Khoord Cabul Pass, still longer and more difficult, bars the passage to Cabul. Afghanistan had been occupied by General Elphinstone, who, fearing for his retreat, sent General Sale to occupy the pass to Jellalabad. In the meantime he neglected the commonest precaution. The Afghans, excited by some wild rumours, rose against him, cut off his provisions, killed the British Envoy by treachery, and compelled the army to shameful capitulation. No faith was kept by the barbarians. Deprived of food, harassed by treacherous attacks, the army dwindled away to a mere handful. The women and children had at last to be surrendered to the faithless enemy; out of 16,000 men who left Cabul only one survivor reached the city of Jellalabad. Disaster in Afghanistan.

4. No insult of this kind has remained long unavenged. General Pollock marched with 8,000 men through the Khyber Pass. He joined General Sale at Jellalabad, who had defended the city, although it was shaken with a hundred shocks of earthquake. In August 1842 the two armies moved through the pass of Khoord Cabul, where their countrymen had perished man by man. The city of Cabul was taken and given up to plunder, and the Great Bazaar was burned to the ground. Afghanistan was entirely reduced, but the English did not care to retain so useless and so *costly a possession.* Vengeance.

CHAPTER II.

FREE TRADE.

1. THE next three years are chiefly occupied with the struggle between protection and free trade, but little progress was made with this question in the session of 1843. The year was taken up with discussions on factory labour, on education, on church rates, with the visit of the Queen to the King of the French, and the excitement at Oxford caused by the defection of some prominent high churchmen to the Church of Rome. It was found that the financial reforms of the previous session had been a brilliant success. Instead of two millions and a half deficit, there was a million and a half surplus after all debts had been paid, and an anticipation of a still larger balance for next year.

Reforms.

2. The emancipation of the Catholics had not succeeded in quieting Ireland. The movement for repeal of the Union was still in full vigour, and O'Connell told a large meeting at Tara that within a year a Parliament would be sitting at College Green in Dublin. Another meeting, summoned with all the parade of military organisation, was prohibited by proclamation, and prevented by O'Connell. He was, nevertheless, tried for sedition and condemned by a Protestant jury to imprisonment and fine. The judgment was reversed after a tempestuous scene in the House of Lords, and the acquittal of the great agitator was received with joy throughout Ireland. Little more was heard of O'Connell. He was now grown old and weary, and his followers knew that they would be treated in future with severity or mercy, as they deserved it. In the next year the Government did an act of justice by increasing the endowment of the *Catholic College* of Maynooth.

Ireland.

3. In the meantime events were rapidly moving towards free trade. Sir R. Peel, assisted by Mr. Gladstone, went on with his financial reforms. He proposed to use the surplus produced by the income tax in reducing the taxes on commodities. A great change was proposed in the sugar duties, wise in the main, but disfigured by traces of protection. The agricultural distress of the year gave the free traders an opportunity of enforcing their views, whilst a new party of young England, led by Mr. Disraeli and Lord John Manners, thought that the landed interests were too heavily taxed already, and ought to be relieved. Free Trade.

4. The Session of 1845 closed quietly enough. The increased Maynooth Grant had been passed, the Jews admitted to municipal offices, the Oregon dispute with the United States arranged, New Zealand pacified. Suddenly an unexpected crisis arose. A disease which entirely destroyed the potato plant appeared first in England and then in Ireland. The whole subsistence of the Irish peasantry was destroyed. Pressure was put upon the Ministry to admit foreign corn free of duty. The country was deluged with the free trade tracts of the Anti-Corn Law League. Sir R. Peel was convinced that protection was no longer tenable, but his Cabinet would not follow him. Lord Stanley resigned, and the Ministry broke up. Lord J. Russell was unable to form a cabinet, and Sir R. Peel was induced to take office again. It was known that he would meet Parliament in 1846, pledged to support the cause of free trade. Potato Disease.

5. The agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws began in Manchester towards the end of 1836. In a season of distress it appeared to some of the most influential members of this rising town that the only remedy lay in free trade, and that by artificially keeping up the price of corn the manufacturing interests Anti-Corn Law League.

of the country were sacrificed to the agricultural interests. Three years later the Anti-Corn Law League was formed. Its most prominent members from the first were Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright, who sacrificed their worldly prosperity in a great measure to the work of converting their countrymen to the principles of true economy. Very large sums of money were collected for the purposes of the League. A free trade hall was built in Manchester. In 1843 the 'Times' acknowledged that the League was a great fact, and compared it to the wooden horse by which the Greeks were secretly brought within the walls of Troy. At the end of 1845 it was stronger than ever in men, money, and enthusiasm.

5. On the assembling of Parliament in 1846, the Queen's speech and the address in reply to it indicated the coming change. Sir R. Peel rose immediately afterwards, and honestly confessed his alteration of opinion. He had observed, he said, during the last three years (1) that wages do not vary with the price of food, and that with high prices you do not necessarily have high wages; (2) that employment, high prices, and abundance contribute directly to the diminution of crime; (3) that by the gradual removal of protection, industry had been promoted, crime had been diminished, and morality improved. Sir R. Peel was followed by Mr. Disraeli, who, expressing the passion of the protectionist country gentlemen, violently assailed the minister. In February Sir R. Peel announced a fixed duty on corn for three years, and afterwards its entire abolition. The free traders attempted to dispense with this delay, but they were beaten by a large majority, and the bill passed easily. The Duke of Wellington secured its acceptance in the House of Lords. He had became wiser since the Reform Bill, and his conduct on this occasion compensated for the errors of his previous career.

Corn Law Repeal.

6. The protectionists determined on their revenge

A Bill for the suppression of crime in Ireland gave the opportunity. Lord George Bentinck assailed the Ministers with violence, and they were defeated by a majority of seventy-three on the very evening that the Corn Bill passed the House of Lords. The Whigs who had assisted Sir R. Peel in carrying free trade now joined the Protectionists in turning him out. Ministers had nothing left them but to resign, and Lord John Russell was ordered to form a cabinet. The new ministry did not do much in the session of 1847. They were obliged to propose a second time the measure for the pacification of Ireland which had brought about the defeat of their opponents. A bill for shortening the hours of labour in factories passed without difficulty. This year was also marked by the death of O'Connell at Genoa, on his way to Rome, and by the voluntary dissolution of the Anti-Corn Law League.

Ministers resign.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHARTER.

1. ALTHOUGH no great question was before the nation, Parliament had been dissolved. The result of the new elections was a slight increase of strength to the Government. It was proceeding to consider simple measures of practical reform, when a new and unexpected danger demanded its attention. A revolution which broke out in France in 1848 overthrew the monarchy of Louis Philippe, and established a republic in its place. The contagion spread throughout Europe. In every country thrones were tottering, and England was not exempt from the general disorder. The discontent of the Irish increased, and Smith O'Brien took the place

Discontent.

of O'Connell. In England the excitement was shown by the agitation of the Chartists.

2. The Chartists derived their name from the sketch of a new Reform Bill, which had obtained the title of the People's Charter. It contained six principal points: 1. Universal suffrage. 2. Annual parliaments. 3. Vote by ballot. 4. Abolition of property qualification for members of parliament. 5. The payment of members. 6. Equal electoral districts. This had been finally drawn up in 1838, but for many years the agitation for it was obscured by other matters. In 1839 a petition containing a million and a quarter names was presented to Parliament. In 1840 an attack made by the Chartists on Newport was crushed by the firmness of the mayor. In 1847 the Chartists put out their full strength and gained several seats in Parliament, and especially the election of their leader Feargus O'Connor for Nottingham.

The People's Charter.

3. Inspired by their successes, the Chartists determined to hold a monster meeting on the tenth of April on Kennington Common; from this place they were to march and present a huge petition to the House of Commons. They even talked of imitating France in the establishment of a republic. The Government determined to prevent the march. Soldiers were posted in all parts of London by the Duke of Wellington, 170,000 special constables were sworn in, the public offices, the bank and post office were armed to the teeth. All their designs ended in failure. The meeting was far smaller than had been expected, the march was given up, and the petition of five million and a half of names was found to contain only a third of this number, and those mainly fictitious. The movement could not survive the ridicule of exposure.

April 10.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GREAT EXHIBITION.

1. THE chief subjects of discontent which existed when our period opened had now been removed. The disabilities of Catholics had been taken away, the corn laws had been repealed, the Irish had been pacified, rebellion in England had been crushed. The country entered upon a career of peaceful progress. In 1849 the navigation laws, which had been passed by Cromwell's Government in 1651, and which had first transferred the carrying trade from Holland to this country, were repealed. This was a legitimate extension of the principles of free trade. Progress.

2. At this time a dispute arose in an ecclesiastical question which was a forerunner of many similar discussions in later years. Mr. Gorham had been presented to a living in the diocese of Exeter. The bishop took the unusual course of examining his opinions, and refused to institute him because he was unsound on the question of baptismal regeneration. The Court of Arches, a court reserved for the trial of ecclesiastical matters, supported the bishop, but its decision was reversed by the judicial committee of the Privy Council, a lay court of appeal which had lately received power of revising the judgments of the ecclesiastical courts. The low church party was rejoiced at the freedom allowed it; the high church party, which had recently been strengthened by a movement to increase its power begun at Oxford, was angry first at the slight thrown on an important doctrine, and secondly that the civil courts should ultimately decide on church matters. However, a Bill introduced to alter the constitution of the court was rejected by the House of Commons. To this year 1850 also The Gorham Case.

belongs the commencement of an attempt to make th universities more useful to the whole nation by the ap pointment of a royal commission. Party spirit was hushe for a time by the death of Sir Robert Peel.

3. Some slight excitement was caused by the appoint ment by the Pope of Roman Catholic bishops under an Archbishop of Westminster, and th division of England into dioceses. It produced howeve much less effect than was anticipated. All thoughts wer concentrated on the Great Exhibition, to be held in Hyd Park in 1851. The design and execution of the schem were entirely the work of Prince Albert. A building of new kind, made of glass and iron, was invented as if fc the very purpose. It contained the industrial products c all nations, and it was hoped that peaceful competition ha rendered the horrors of war for ever impossible. Th enterprise was a brilliant success, it fulfilled the hopes c its projectors, and the profits wisely invested have been means of promoting art and culture throughout Englanc

The Great Exhibition.

4. As if in mockery of human designs, this hope c peace was succeeded by a destructive war. Louis Napoleor nephew of the Great Emperor, President c the French Republic since 1848, had just mad himself Emperor of the French. It was feared that a mili tary power so near to us might drag us into an unwis policy. Lord John Russell was succeeded as minister b Lord Derby. But a dissolution of Parliament brought bac the old ministry with Lord Aberdeen at its head, an Mr. Gladstone as Chancellor of Exchequer. His budge inaugurated a new series of financial reforms. H formed a plan of reducing the national debt, while h retained the income tax in order to make it easier to ta more equally the chief articles of daily consumption.

Change of Ministry.

5. A dispute had arisen between Russia and Turkey *ostensibly about* the guardianship of the Holy Places i

Jerusalem, but the root of the quarrel lay far deeper. Turkey, a decaying power, had become more and more unfit to govern Christians. Russia was deeply interested in protecting the Slavonic races under the Turkish rule who were of the same blood and origin as herself; she wished also to extend her power to the Dardanelles. If great calmness had been shown on both sides peace might have been preserved. But the Russian Emperor Nicholas was violent and impetuous, our ambassador at Constantinople was a sworn enemy of Russia. A war was necessary to the Emperor of the French for the consolidation of his throne. The spirit of both nations was gradually roused. The Russians entered the Danubian principalities, and burned the Turkish fleet at Sinope. Lord Aberdeen strained every nerve for peace. Lord Palmerston, the home secretary, threatened to resign unless strong measures were adopted. The country approached nearer and nearer to the brink of war.

War.

BOOK VI.

WAR AND MUTINY. 1853–1858.

CHAPTER I.

THE CRIMEAN WAR.

1. In November, 1853, the Emperor of Russia declared war against Turkey. To the surprise of Europe, the Turks at first held their own against the invader. The Russians were repulsed from every point of

Outbreak of War.

attack along the Danube, and the Emperor became more exasperated at the failure of his arms. The Emperor of the French attempted in vain to mediate. At last a message was sent by England that unless the Russian troops were withdrawn across the Pruth before the end of April 1854, it would be considered that war had been declared. To this the Czar made no reply, and the war began its course.

2. The plan of operations was very simple. Russia could only be attacked in her extremities, and England could only act on a sea base. A fleet was sent into the Baltic with high expectations of success, which were not realised, and a large force of English and French troops were despatched into the Black Sea with the object of taking Sebastopol, a powerful fortress which the Russians had recently constructed at great expense. In September the allies landed at Eupatoria, in the Crimea, and six days later completely defeated the Russians at the Battle of the Alma. It might have been possible to attack Sebastopol with success from the northern side, but it was thought more prudent to besiege it from the south, and the batteries opened fire in October. The Battle of Balaklava fought on October 25 was signalised by a charge of six hundred light cavalry, in which nearly half were killed or wounded. In November was fought the Battle of Inkerman, in which an attempt to surprise the British army was defeated by the steadiness of the guards. The winter tried the army severely, and the want of supplies and hospitals roused indignation at home.

Crimea.

3. Discontent ripened into suspicion. Mr. Roebuck proposed an inquiry into the conduct of the Ministry. Unable to meet it, the cabinet of Lord Aberdeen resigned, and, after a short delay, Lord *Palmerston* formed a Government not very different *from the previous* one. It soon lost the services of

Change of Ministry.

Mr. Gladstone and two others, but it was able to carry on the war with undiminished vigour. The death of the Czár in March gave only a slight hope of peace. In April the siege was reopened, and continued with varying success. On June 18, the anniversary of Waterloo, the allies were repulsed in an attack upon the Redan and Malakhoff batteries, and at the end of the month Lord Raglan, the commander-in-chief, died. At last, after a month's incessant bombardment, an attack was made on the fortifications in September. The result was that the Russians evacuated the town, blowing up their forts, and leaving their wounded behind them.

4. Before the end of the year negotiations for peace were begun by the help of Austria. The French were more anxious for a settlement than the English. The points most difficult for Russia to accept were the limitation of her power in the Black Sea and the cession of a portion of Bessarabia to Roumania. These points were at last arranged, and the Treaty of Paris was signed in March 1856. Thus ended a war which crippled the power of Russia for twenty years, and delayed for a time the inevitable fate of Turkey.

Peace.

CHAPTER II.

INDIAN MUTINY.

1. THE rest of the year 1856 passed quietly, but in the spring of 1857 the Government were defeated on a motion of Mr. Cobden's condemning their action with regard to a war which had broken out in China. Ministers determined to dissolve Parliament rather than to resign, and the issue placed before the country was that of confidence in Lord Palmerston.

China War.

In the election Cobden and Bright were rejected as members of the peace party. The liberal cause on the whole was supported by a triumphant majority.

2. The elections were closely followed by a terrible calamity in India. A wide-spread rebellion of the native soldiers had broken out in the country, accompanied by atrocities such as English men and women had never suffered before. The pretext for the revolt was the dislike of the Indian native soldiers to the use of greased cartridges which might contain the fat of cows or pigs, animals which their religion teaches them may not be eaten. This rebellion may have been connected with the Russian war, but it was certainly stimulated by the withdrawal of troops for China. The mutiny first broke out at Barrackpore; it then appeared at Lucknow and Meerut. Delhi, the ancient capital, was seized by the rebels, and the native king was placed on the throne of his ancestors. The whole of Northern India was in disturbance. Sir Henry Lawrence, with the English garrison, was a prisoner at Lucknow in Oude. The treachery of Nana Sahib decoyed the garrison of Cawnpore to their destruction. The wives and children whom they had left behind were slaughtered by native butchers and thrown into a well.

Indian mutiny.

3. The Government strained every effort to recover the country. Delhi was taken by Wilson, Cawnpore was relieved by Havelock—too late, however, to save his countrywomen from murder. A conqueror in twelve battles, he entered Lucknow in time to prevent a similar calamity. He died in the hour of victory. A black cloud of mutineers retook Cawnpore, and threatened Lucknow, but they were entirely defeated in the field by Sir Colin Campbell. At the close of 1857 the great dependency was again almost at peace, and in June 1858, *the work was* completed by the capture of Gwalior.

Recovery.

4. Great as was the provocation, it may be doubted whether too wild and passionate a vengeance was not inflicted on the mutineers. Many of them were blown from guns, a death peculiarly horrible in their eyes. Our country received a severe lesson from the shock of this calamity. Among its principal effects were the transference of the government of India from the East India Company to the Crown, and the awakening of Englishmen to a deeper interest in Indian affairs. Results.

BOOK VII.

THE NEW REFORM BILL. 1858–1868.

CHAPTER I.

LORD DERBY.

1. An attack made by Italian refugees on the life of the Emperor Napoleon in January 1858 was the occasion of a demand from the French Government that we should cease to offer facilities for the conspiracies of political exiles. Lord Palmerston, in deference to this request, proposed to alter the English law of conspiracy to murder. When this was rejected by a majority of 19, he immediately resigned, and was succeeded by Lord Derby at the head of a Conservative Ministry. The year was occupied by various internal reforms: the choice of Indian civil servants by competitive examination was extended, the Thames was purified, a telegraphic cable was laid between England and America. It appeared that the question of Parliamentary Reform Change of Ministry.

which had been stopped by the war, but had never sunk into oblivion, had now to be faced, and Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli braced themselves to deal with a problem which they acknowledged to be unwelcome.

2. The Reform Bill introduced by Mr. Disraeli was not satisfactory. It gave the franchise to a number of different classes without resting it on any broad or comprehensive basis. A resolution proposed by Lord John Russell which expressed this feeling was carried against the Government by a majority of 39. Ministers determined to dissolve. The issue before the country was not entirely of a domestic character. War had broken out between France and Austria for the liberation of Italy, and the feeling of England was strongly with Italian Unity. The liberals, who were known to have this cause at heart, were returned in a majority of 50, and immediately after Parliament met Ministers were compelled to resign, defeated in a vote of confidence. This was the sixth change of ministry which had taken place in fifteen years.

New Parliament.

CHAPTER II.

LORD PALMERSTON.

1. LORD PALMERSTON now became Prime Minister, with Lord J. Russell as Foreign Secretary, Mr. Gladstone Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord Granville President of the Council (June 1859). The first step of the Government was the conclusion of a commercial treaty with France, based on principles of free trade. Mr. Cobden had been the negotiator, and Mr. Gladstone, in a speech which announced a new era of *financial policy*, expressed the long services of the free

Reform Bill.

trader in language of universally accepted praise. The Ministry attempted to satisfy the expectations of the country by bringing forward a Reform Bill. It was as simple as its forerunner had been complicated. It proposed a franchise of £10 in counties, £6 in boroughs, and a redistribution of seats. The languid interest felt in it by the Premier was a sign of the indifference of the country, and the Bill was withdrawn.

2. In 1861 a civil war broke out in America between the Northern and Southern States. The matters in dispute between them were many and various, but the most important point at issue was the question of slavery. The English people generally took the side of the South, partly from a supposed community of feeling and partly from a jealousy of America, and a wish to see her dismembered. This feeling was intensified by the capture of two Southern envoys while under the protection of the British flag. There was danger of war breaking out, but the Northern States submitted to an ultimatum, and returned the prisoners.

American War.

3. The affair of the 'Trent,' as this dispute was called from the name of the ship in which the envoys were sailing, was the last public question in which Prince Albert, now for some time since called the Prince Consort, was engaged. After a few days' illness, he died at Windsor in December 1861, at the age of forty-two. The grief of the English nation was universal and spontaneous. Only gradually did the country come to learn that he had been king of England for twenty years, while no one knew it.

Death of the Prince Consort.

4. The American war affected England in two ways. First, the ordinary supply of cotton to our manufacturing districts was cut off, and a great distress was felt in Lancashire, which was known by the name of the cotton famine. The operatives

Cotton Famine and 'Alabama.'

displayed the utmost patience and self-control under their afflictions, and large subscriptions were contributed for their support. Lord Derby gave the services of his genius to the organisation of relief, and cotton, the threads of which were of a shorter length, was provided from India. Before the American war was over the worst pressure of distress had passed. The other trouble was of longer duration. A ship called the 'Alabama' was fitted out from an English dockyard, notwithstanding the protest of the American Ambassador, with the object of making war on American commerce in the interests of the Southern States. The Americans felt that the negligence shown in not stopping this vessel expressed only too clearly the sympathies of England. They could not at this time do anything to prevent or to avenge the wrong, but when the war was over a feeling of bitterness was left, which nearly led to an open rupture, and was with difficulty appeased.

5. Lord Palmerston died in October 1865. The condition of parties during these closing years was remarkable.

Repose.

Popular throughout the country, the Premier was trusted equally by Conservatives and Liberals. The policy of a long life was the earnest of his liberalism; and, at the same time, he was known to be opposed to organic reform. The great questions which were agitated in later years now slumbered, and the reform of the representation, which lay at the root of all other measures, was deferred with the admonition that the nation should rest and be thankful for what it had already achieved. A new election in the spring of 1865 returned a solid Liberal majority with a few Liberal losses. No loss, however, was so great as the premature death of Richard Cobden.

6. Earl Russell succeeded Lord Palmerston as Premier; *Mr. Gladstone* became leader of the House of

Commons; the ministry in other respects remained unchanged. The history of this administration is the history of the Liberal Reform Bill. The Bill introduced by Mr. Gladstone in March 1866 gave the franchise to householders of the value of £14 in counties and £7 in boroughs. It was evidently a compromise, and was not heartily supported either by the cabinet or by the party. A section of the Liberals, called by Mr. Bright the 'Cave of Adullam,' joined the opposition in resisting it, and in June the ministry were defeated and resigned. They were succeeded by a Conservative Government, the principal members of which were Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli.

Earl Russell Prime Minister.

CHAPTER III.

MR. DISRAELI.

1. LORD DERBY promised a safe and moderate measure of reform. But the agitation throughout the country was very great. The war in Germany, which in six weeks made Prussia instead of Austria the dominant power in that country, passed almost unheeded. The somewhat cruel suppression of a rebellion in Jamaica by Governor Eyre was condemned by advanced Liberals. The laying of a telegraph cable between Ireland and Newfoundland gave hope to those who wished for a union of affection between two mighty continents. But the desire for reform was unmistakable. In July the Reform League was forbidden to hold a meeting in Hyde Park, but the masses who had accompanied them threw down the railings and pushed back the police who would have barred their passage. The reform addresses of Gladstone and Bright were received with enthusiasm.

Reform Agitation.

2. At the beginning of the session of 1867, Mr. Disrael proposed resolutions which were to be the basis of a reform bill. A considerable extension of the franchise was contemplated, limited by a system of plurality of votes. Parliament objected to this method, and it became necessary for Ministers to agree in a definite measure; of two alternative courses the more liberal was adopted, but Lord Carnarvon, Lord Cranbourne, and General Peel could not accede to it and left the Ministry. Mr. Disraeli expounded his measure in March. The proposed franchise was founded on rating and not on rental. The franchise in boroughs was given to all householders paying rates; in counties it was given to occupiers of property rated at £15 a year. Besides this, the franchise was given to all men of certain education, or who had saved a certain sum of money. In some cases voters were allowed a double vote in respect of possessing a double qualification.

Reform Bill introduced.

3. The Bill was violently opposed by Mr. Gladstone who objected to its provisions in almost every particular, but the section of his party, who formed the 'Cave of Adullam,' declined to follow him in procuring the defeat of the Government. Notwithstanding this, the measure was gradually changed piece by piece until it was entirely altered. The abolition of compound householders, that is, of those whose rates were paid for them in the lump by their landlords, nearly quadrupled the number of voters; lodgers were admitted to the franchise, the county franchise was reduced, and the distribution of seats was changed. The Bill, as it was passed by both Houses weary with argument at the end of July, almost reached the limit of manhood suffrage. It had been passed by a Conservative Ministry, and Lord Derby described it as *a leap in the dark.*

Amendments in Committee.

4. It was necessary that Parliament should meet again in the autumn of 1867 to vote supplies for an expedition to Abyssinia, undertaken to release some Englishmen who were kept in prison by the king. The prisoners were released, and Magdala, the king's capital, destroyed. Early in the session of 1868 Lord Derby resigned the Premiership from bad health, and was succeeded by Mr. Disraeli. It soon became obvious that the main point of struggle between the two parties would be the disestablishment of the Irish Church. At the end of March, Mr. Gladstone moved resolutions to that effect. The Government had been defeated by small majorities before the Easter recess. In April it was beaten on the Irish Church question by a majority of eighty-five. Parliament was dissolved, and the result of the elections was a signal victory for the Liberals. The Government did not wait for the opening of the session, but resigned their offices, and just before the close of 1868 Mr. Gladstone became Prime Minister.

Return of the Liberals.

BOOK VIII.

MR. GLADSTONE. 1868–1874.

CHAPTER I.

IRISH CHURCH AND LAND.

1. THE chief members of Mr. Gladstone's cabinet were Lord Hatherley, Mr. Lowe, Mr. Bruce, Lord Granville, Mr. Bright, and Mr. Childers. During its five years' tenure

of office it showed a great activity in every branch of administrative reform. This could only have been maintained by a large majority in Parliament, directed by a chief of exceptional ability, at a time when the feeling of the country was wrought to an unusual strain. Its first efforts were directed to the removal of Irish grievances by the disestablishment of the Irish Church, and the regulation of Irish land. The country had determined by the elections that the Irish branch of the Church of England should cease to exist under State protection. The working out of that change was difficult and complicated. The arrangements proposed by Mr. Gladstone were passed by large majorities in the House of Commons, and met with no serious opposition in the House of Lords. Experience has shown the wisdom of the measure, and the large surplus resulting from it still remains to be applied to the material benefit of the country.

Disestablishment of Irish Church.

2. The Irish Land Act passed in the session of 1870 was a matter of greater difficulty. Its object was to give such security to the tenant as might induce him to spend money in improving his holding, to lend money to landlords to be spent in improvements, to put a restraint on hasty and unjust evictions, and to establish a ready means of arbitration between landlord and tenant. The Bill, though full of complicated provisions, met with little opposition in either House, and became law on the 1st of August.

Irish Land Act.

3. The same session was occupied with another measure of first-rate importance. Mr. W. E. Forster produced a comprehensive Education Act to deal with primary education, that namely, of the poorer classes. Time was given for different religious denominations to supply deficiencies in existing schools, but if *that were not* done school boards were to be created, who

Education Act.

should provide at the cost of the ratepayer a cheap, universal, and unsectarian education. The result has surpassed the most sanguine hopes. Every year since the passing of the Act the number of ignorant children has diminished. A great lift has been given to the educational system of the country; universities and public schools have undergone revision, and the country now only waits for the organised instruction of the middle classes.

CHAPTER II.

WAR BETWEEN FRANCE AND GERMANY.

1. THIS peaceful progress at home was not without violent contrast abroad. Since the defeat of Austria in 1866 a strong jealousy had existed between France and Prussia. War broke out suddenly in July 1870. The successes of the Germans were rapid and unexpected. The French army was driven back from the Rhine, it was cut into two parts by a series of bloody battles, Marshal Bazaine was shut up with a large army in Metz, the Emperor was driven into the Ardennes. Here he was surrounded by the consummate skill of Moltke, and forced to surrender at Sedan on September 1. On receipt of the news, the Empire was abolished in Paris, the Empress and her son fled to England.

Fall of the Emperor of the French.

2. Paris was invested by the German army, and soon began to suffer from famine. The siege was prolonged throughout the winter. About the middle of January the success of the Germans became certain, and on January 18 King William of Prussia was saluted as German Emperor in the Galerie des Glaces at Versailles. Peace was made shortly afterwards. Alsace

Peace.

and Lorraine were ceded to Germany, and an indemnity of 200 millions paid for the expenses of the war.

3. The English Government had with great skill and patience preserved the neutrality of the nation. This was tried most severely when the Russian Government repudiated the clauses of the Treaty of Paris referring to the Black Sea. The matter was amicably arranged at a conference in London. The session of 1871 was not idle. Purchase in the army was abolished, the English civil service was made attainable by competition, the universities were thrown open to the whole country without regard to religious denominations, trades unions were recognised by the law, and the powers of local government were extended to country districts. In the winter the Prince of Wales became seriously ill, and in the middle of December the whole country waited in suspense for tidings of life and death. Before the beginning of the year he was out of danger.

Internal Affairs.

CHAPTER III.

LIBERAL REVERSES.

1. IN 1872 a system was adopted of electing Members of Parliament by ballot, or secret voting. This measure had long been urged by advanced Liberals and opposed by Conservatives. But the chief event of the year was the settlement of the so-called 'Alabama' claims, that is, the compensation for damage done by this and other privateers in the American war. In accordance with the Treaty of Washington, these matters were arranged in a conference held at Geneva, in which the *chief living* authorities on international law formed the *tribunal.* The award was given against England, and a

'Alabama' Arbitration.

sum of nearly four millions had to be paid to America But friendship between the two countries was restored at this small price, and a new principle of arbitration was asserted in public affairs.

2. The session of 1873 was intended by the Government to remove another Irish grievance by establishing a system of Catholic university education. The measure had been carefully prepared by Mr. Gladstone, and it was introduced with good hope of success. But it was soon found that it satisfied neither party. The Government were defeated, and the Ministry resigned. Mr. Disraeli, however, refused to take office, and the seals were resumed by their former holders. A few changes were made in the Cabinet, and a Judicature Bill was passed, remodelling our whole system of judicial procedure.

Irish Education.

3. The Government were weakened and discredited. Seat after seat was won by the Conservatives. The Liberal majority became every day smaller and less compact. At last, in the beginning of 1874, Mr. Gladstone determined to appeal to the country, and, to the surprise of everybody, in January Parliament was dissolved. In five years the majority of Liberal supporters had dwindled from 116 to 66. The result of the elections was a triumph for the Conservatives. The Cabinet did not wait for the meeting of Parliament. Mr. Disraeli accepted office as Premier, supported by Lord Derby, Lord Salisbury, Lord Carnarvon, Sir S. Northcote, Mr. Cross, and Mr. Hardy. Shortly after this Mr. Gladstone announced that he had retired for ever from the leadership of the Liberal party.

Dissolution of Parliament.

BOOK IX.

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD. 1874–1880.

CHAPTER I.

ENGLAND AND RUSSIA IN EUROPE.

1. THE Session of 1874 passed quietly under the new Government. Its principal work was the Public Worship Regulation Act, introduced by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The object of this Act was to restrain the extreme High Church clergy from using ritual which imitated the ceremonies of the Romish Church against the wishes of their parishioners. It was strongly opposed by Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone, but Mr. Disraeli came forward in defence of it at the call of Sir William Harcourt. Experience has shown that the Act has effected less good and done less mischief than its friends and enemies expected of it. The choice of a successor to Mr. Gladstone, who announced his retirement in January 1874, was not made without difficulty. Lord Hartington was preferred to Mr. Forster, chiefly because he could more easily make way for the return of his former leader.

The Public Worship Act.

2. The new Prime Minister cared more for foreign than for domestic politics. The next five years of his government were filled with events which brought home to Englishmen the imperial position of their country, but which also made them realise the burden of responsibility which attaches to it. On November 8, 1875, the Prince of Wales landed at Bombay, the first step of a royal progress through

The Empress of India.

India. In the same month the Government purchased four millions worth of shares in the Suez Canal. The control of the India Office over our great dependency was made more complete, and, on the resignation of Lord Northbrook, Lord Lytton was sent as Governor-General to carry out the new policy. Early in the following year the Queen assumed the title of Empress of India, with a proviso that it should not be used in this country. These events showed the presence of a new spirit in our Government, which was regarded by some with enthusiasm, by some with ridicule, by others with dismay.

3. In the summer of 1875 an insurrection against Turkey broke out in the provinces of Herzegovina and Bosnia. Attempts were made by the European powers to repress it, but next year the rebellion spread to Bulgaria, and was put down by the Turks with terrible atrocity. Mr. Gladstone left his retirement to denounce these horrors, and called for the expulsion of the Turkish Government from Europe; but England was not disposed to surrender her traditional policy of maintaining Turkey as a barrier against the advance of Russia to the Bosphorus. Servia and Montenegro now declared war against their suzerain. Lord Salisbury attended a conference at Constantinople, in which the Great Powers endeavoured to avert the coming conflict. It was of no avail. In June 1877 the Russian armies crossed the Danube, and, in spite of the gallant defence of Plevna by the Turks, were in January 1878 almost within sight of the towers of Santa Sophia. War between England and Russia seemed imminent. Mr. Disraeli, now the Earl of Beaconsfield, asked for a credit of six millions, and sent the English fleet to the Dardanelles. The Russians made with the Turks the Treaty of St. Stefano, which created a large Bulgaria, defined by her historic limits, with a port on the Ægean. Lord

Russo-Turkish War.

Carnarvon and Lord Derby left the Ministry. A contingent of Indian troops was summoned to Europe.

4. Prince Bismarck now interfered as a mediator. A congress was summoned at Berlin, at which England was represented by Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury. The results of the final treaty were not favourable to Turkey nor humiliating to Russia. Roumania, Servia, and Montenegro were declared independent; Bulgaria was confined to the north of the Balkans, but the addition of Sophia held out the hope that the new principality might spread down the valley of the Maritza. Greece obtained little that she had desired. Bosnia and Herzegovina were handed over to Austria. By two previous conventions Russia recovered the part of Bessarabia which she had ceded in 1856 and the port of Batoum; while Turkey handed over the island of Cyprus to England on payment of a yearly tribute. Lord Beaconsfield on his return to England was received with acclamation, and was able to announce that he had brought back Peace with Honour.

Treaty of Berlin.

CHAPTER II.

ENGLAND AND RUSSIA IN ASIA.

1. IN the far East, England and Russia advancing, one from the south, the other from the north, with the inevitable progress of civilisation against barbarism, had narrowed the distance between their frontiers. They were divided by the debatable land of Afghanistan, the home of a tumultuous and independent people. *Should this* country be absorbed by Russia or *by England, or should it* separate the two empires as a

Afghanistan.

neutral zone? In July 1878 a Russian ambassador arrived at Cabul, the capital, and was well received by Shere Ali, the Ameer, although the reception of an English agent had been refused the year before. For the sake of English prestige, this envoy must be withdrawn or an English embassy admitted. In August, Sir Neville Chamberlain, with the following of a thousand men, demanded entrance at the Khyber Pass. It was refused, and he returned to Peshawur. The English Government replied that unless their ambassador was received before November 21 Afghanistan would be occupied in force. Submission came too late. The country was invaded by three columns. The British troops entered Cabul, the Ameer left it, and soon afterwards died.

2. In May 1879 his successor, Yakoob Khan, signed the Treaty of Gandamak, by which the English, on payment of a yearly subsidy of 60,000*l.*, received the scientific frontier which the new policy demanded. Afghanistan was guaranteed from attack and the British Resident was admitted to Cabul. But the disaster of 1841 was soon repeated to a generation which had forgotten it. In September the British Resident, Sir Louis Cavagnari, was massacred by the populace, with sixty-eight of his attendants. Yakoob Khan escaped to India. General Roberts soon entered Cabul as an avenger, but the fiery Pathans rose in insurrection with forces four times as large as his; they forced him to retire, and he did not recover Cabul, after severe fighting, till Christmas Eve. Cabul.

3. After a few more struggles the country was subdued. Our first policy was to separate Candahar, and to place it under an independent prince with an English Resident, while we sought for some chief of the royal house who might be strong enough to make peace with Peace.

us. Such a one was found in Abdurrhaman, a direct descendant of Dost Mahomed. Negotiations begun with him by Lord Lytton were completed by a new Viceroy under a changed Government. The dream of a scientific frontier was given up. We were content to secure a friendly ruler whom we could trust, and we restored to his crown the two priceless jewels of Candahar and Herat.

CHAPTER III.

SOUTH AFRICA.

1. THE Cape of Good Hope, first colonised by the Dutch, has been English for more than one hundred years. The Dutch farmers, called Boers, have been gradually driven into the interior, and native states have grown up in the midst of the two nations. The Transvaal Republic, an independent Boer state, was annexed by England in 1877 from a mistaken idea of the wishes of the inhabitants. This brought us into collisions with the Zulus, a race trained to war, like the ancient Spartans, whose king, Cetewayo, had hitherto been well-disposed to the English Government. Sir Bartle Frere, made Governor of the Cape in 1877, considered the existence of this nation of warriors as a standing danger to English interests. On a slight dispute the country was invaded in the hope of a speedy conquest; but on January 22, 1879, Lord Chelmsford's camp at Isandhlana was surprised by a force of twenty-five thousand Zulus and utterly destroyed, a disaster only partially retrieved by the gallant defence of Rorke's Drift by Chard and Bromhead. Reinforcements were hurried up from England, Ceylon, and St. Helena. Naked savages, however

Cetewayo.

brave and well-trained, could not contend against disciplined troops; still the struggle was severe, and it was not until the end of August that Cetewayo was captured. Prince Louis, son of Napoleon III., who had been reluctantly allowed to join the army, was killed in a reconnaissance by a handful of Zulus.

2. The battle of Ulundi, which put an end to the Zulu war, had been won by Lord Chelmsford, but he had already been superseded by Sir Garnet Wolseley. The new general put down the native chiefs Morosi and Sikuni, but he could not persuade the Boers of the Transvaal to submit. The cost of these wars made the Government unpopular. Imperial policy had been nowhere a success. Its brilliancy did not compensate for its burdens. A series of bad harvests had made money scarce. Attacks on foreign policy were coupled with demands for an extended suffrage. The popularity of the Government was on the wane. The distress fell with a special heaviness on Ireland, where large rents had in many cases to be paid to absentee landlords for property which the tenants had improved. A cry was raised, 'Get rid of the landlords,' and Mr. Parnell founded a Land League for the purpose of buying them out. Constitutional agitation was unfortunately accompanied by dishonesty and outrage, which were met by the Government with severe methods of repression. Ireland.

3. Parliament was now approaching its close, and in the autumn recess platforms resounded with the war cries of the coming fray. Mr. Gladstone led the attack by standing for Midlothian, and conducted a fortnight's campaign of incessant speaking. The Queen opened Parliament in person on February 15, 1880. The Royal Speech told of peace in Afghanistan and South Africa, and of the success of the Treaty of Berlin. It announced no measures of impor- Dissolution of Parliament.

tance, but the dissolution which followed in March was unexpected. In the issue before the country Lord Beaconsfield took his stand on the necessity of an imperial policy and denunciation of Home Rule. Lord Hartington put forward the stability of Liberal tradition, and Mr. Gladstone vigorously foiled the policy of his rival. The elections were a surprise to both parties, but they spoke with no uncertain voice. The new Parliament contained 349 Liberals, as against 351 Conservatives in the old. The Conservative opposition was now 243, while the Liberal opposition in the late House had been 250. The numbers of the Home Rule party had risen from 51 to 60.

4. Lord Beaconsfield determined not to meet the new Parliament, and only delayed his resignation until the Queen had returned from the Continent. She first sent for Lord Hartington, as leader of the Opposition in the Commons, but on the representation of himself and Lord Granville summoned Mr. Gladstone. He consented to form a Government, taking for himself the offices of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. The principal members of his former Cabinet returned with him to power. The Radical party was represented by Mr. Chamberlain at the Board of Trade, Mr. Fawcett at the Post Office, and Sir Charles Dilke as Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Sir William Harcourt at the Home Office, Mr. Mundella in charge of Education, and Mr. Bright as Chancellor of the Duchy, gave a broad foundation of confidence to the new Government.

Change of Government.

BOOK X.

MR. GLADSTONE. 1880–1885.

CHAPTER I.

FOREIGN POLICY.

1. THE foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield had been essentially of a forward, perhaps even of an aggressive, character. The party which had come into office by attacking this policy was bound to move in a different direction. Mr. Gladstone inherited a legacy of complications in Eastern Europe, in Asia, and in South Africa which needed skill and patience to unravel. The changed spirit of the new Ministry was soon apparent. A declaration was elicited from Austria to the effect that she had no intention of extending her authority any farther than the Balkan peninsula. By a combined demonstration of European fleets the harbour of Dulcigno was ceded to Montenegro in accordance with the Treaty of Berlin. A similar influence was used to keep Greece at peace until she obtained all the extension of territory which she could get, but not all that she had been led to hope for. Reaction.

2. In Afghanistan the battle of Maiwand was fought by 2,500 troops, of whom only 500 were British, against 12,000 of the enemy. It was followed by a disastrous retreat to Candahar, where the English army was shut up until General Roberts relieved them from Cabul. In South Africa, the Boers of the Transvaal, encouraged by the opposition of the Liberal party to their annexation, and finding the Afghanistan and Transvaal.

colonists occupied with a war against the Basutos, proclaimed the revival of their Republic. Our generals underrated the strength of the Boers and their skill as marksmen, and the reverses of a short campaign culminated in the disaster of Majuba Hill on February 26, 1881. After three years' negotiation the Transvaal Republic was restored under conditions which secured the rights of the native races.

CHAPTER II.

IRISH POLICY.

1. A DIFFERENT policy was also adopted towards Ireland. The Queen's Speech announced that the existing Coercion Act would not be renewed. A Bill was passed in the Commons to put a stop to unjust evictions, but it was rejected by a large majority in the House of Lords. Excitement and agitation in Ireland increased. A system of 'boycotting' grew up, by which landlords and agents who violated the principles of the Land League were cut off from all communication with their fellow-men. Crimes and outrages increased. A Coercion Act was introduced, which was opposed by the Irish members with every device of obstruction. One sitting continued almost without interruption for fifty hours. The next day the whole of the Irish party was suspended from the service of the House. The Coercion Act was finally passed on March 2.

The Coercion.

2. The Government had determined that repressive and remedial measures should proceed together, and on April 7, 1881, Mr. Gladstone produced his Land Bill. It established a special court to *decide upon the conflicting* claims between the landlord

Land Act.

and tenant. It accepted what was called the principle of the 'F, F, F'—fair rent, free sale, and fixity of tenure. Before it was read a second time, Lord Beaconsfield had died after a short illness. The scope of the Bill was extended by the Irish party. It was violently attacked in the House of Lords. A collision between the two Houses was with difficulty avoided, and the Bill became law in the middle of August. The Coercion Act, however, was not to remain a dead-letter. On October 13, Mr. Parnell, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Sexton, and other leaders of the Land League were arrested in Dublin and sent to Kilmainham Gaol. They replied by calling on the Irish people to pay no rent whilst their leaders were in prison. Secret societies began to take the place of open combination.

3. During the spring of 1882 neither branch of the Government policy towards Ireland seemed to be successful. The Lords attacked the working of the Land Act, and impeded its operation; while Mr. Forster did not succeed in repressing disorder even by the full use of the Coercion Act. Up to April 18 there had been 918 arrests, and over 600 men were in prison. Mr. Parnell, whilst still in Kilmainham, drafted a Bill to relieve distressed tenants of all arrears of rent up to the passing of the Land Act in 1881. It was introduced into the House, and the Government appeared to approve of the principles on which it was based. At the beginning of May the Irish members were released from prison, and at the same time Lord Cowper was succeeded as Lord-Lieutenant by Lord Spencer, while Mr. Forster resigned the Irish Secretaryship. These events formed part of what is known as the 'Kilmainham Treaty,' an arrangement which provided that the Government should take steps *to remit* arrears and establish peasant proprietors, and

The Kilmainham Treaty.

that the leaders of the Irish party should do their best to pacify the country.

4. Mr. Forster strongly opposed this new policy, and his arguments were enforced by a terrible catastrophe. On May 6, Lord Frederick Cavendish arrived in Dublin as the new Chief Secretary. In the bright summer evening, as he was walking through Phœnix Park to his new home, he was barbarously murdered, together with Mr. Burke, who was his companion. The assassins drove off and disappeared. It was afterwards ascertained that Mr. Burke was the victim aimed at, and that the murder of the Chief Secretary was unpremeditated. Next morning, which was Sunday, the news fell with startling horror on the three kingdoms. Mr. G. Trevelyan stepped gallantly into the breach. A new Coercion Act was passed of extreme severity with little opposition except from the Irish members. At the same time an Arrears Act was passed in the teeth of the House of Lords. Little amelioration was experienced; the year closed amidst outrages and murders.

Lord Frederick Cavendish.

5. In January 1883 twenty men were arrested in Dublin, one of whom was James Carey, recently elected to the Dublin Town Council. During the trial of the prisoners he turned Queen's evidence, and confessed that he had planned the murders in Phœnix Park and had given the signal for the crime. He had also organised plans for assassinating Mr. Forster, and had been the mainspring of the attack upon Mr. Field. Five of the prisoners were hanged, and Carey was sent by the Government to South Africa, where he was shot by a man who followed his track for vengeance. There were other signs that the spirit of rebellion was not at rest. Explosions of dynamite organised by American sympathisers with Ireland took place at the public

Vengeance.

offices and at railway stations. This scare continued at intervals throughout two years, and culminated with the wrecking of the House of Commons by an explosion in the beginning of 1885.

CHAPTER III.

EGYPT.

1. EGYPT has for many years been a bone of contention between France and England. The extravagance of the Khedive Ismail made it necessary to establish a system of control in order to secure the payment of his creditors. The two countries undertook the task, and their authority was made more complete by the deposition of Ismail and the appointment of Tewfik as his successor. But a movement towards self-government arose in the country, and a national party was formed under Ahmed Arabi, who became Pasha in 1882. The Egyptian army was devoted to him. On June 10 a riot of doubtful origin broke out in Alexandria. It appeared that Arabi was defying England and France, and was fortifying Alexandria, supported by the Porte. The French and English fleets had been for some time anchored in the harbour, and on July 10 Sir Beauchamp Seymour demanded the surrender of all the forts. The French declined to fight, and steamed away to Port Saïd. Arabi.

2. The bombardment began two days later, and continued till the afternoon. For twenty-four hours the city was given up to plunder, and more than two thousand Europeans were massacred. British troops which were wanting in the first attack were now poured into Alexandria, under the command of Sir Garnet Tel-el-Kebir.

Wolseley. On September 13, Arabi and the Egyptian army were attacked at Tel-el-Kebir and entirely defeated. Cairo was captured by a bold stroke, and Arabi was taken prisoner and sent in exile to Ceylon.

3. The victory of Tel-el-Kebir left the responsibility of managing Egypt in English hands. One of the darkest spots on the dark continent was the Soudan, which had been conquered by Mahomet Ali in 1819. It was the centre of the slave trade, and it was not till fifty years later that an attempt was made to put down the abomination. In 1881 the Soudan witnessed the appearance of the Mahdi, a prophet foretold by Mahomet, who was to restore the Mussulman religion. In the next year he defeated the Egyptian army, and in 1883 completely annihilated the forces of Hicks Pasha in Kordofan.

The Soudan.

4. The English Government insisted upon the abandonment of the Soudan, but recognised the necessity of rescuing the Egyptian garrisons. For this purpose they sent out General Charles Gordon, a hero and a saint, who had been Governor of the Soudan from 1874 to 1879. A force was dispatched by the Egyptian Government to Suakim, on the Red Sea, to relieve the eastern garrisons and to oppose Osman Digma, the lieutenant of the Mahdi. Notwithstanding the efforts of English officers, the Arabs defeated the Egyptians at El Teb. We sent out reinforcements and relieved Tokha. We defeated Osman Digma and burnt his camp, but we shrunk from opening the road to Berber on the Nile, and in April 1884 withdrew our troops.

General Gordon.

5. At this time the anxiety felt for Gordon in Khartoum was intense. He had gone out without promise of assistance, but public opinion demanded that he should be relieved. At last, at the end of *1884, a small expedition* was sent to his succour under *Lord Wolseley. Disasters* followed fast. Burnaby fell

Khartoum.

at Abou-Klea, and Stewart soon afterwards died of his wounds. At last Wilson, his successor, reached Gubat, on the Nile. He found four steamers sent by Gordon, and hoped soon to press his hand. The English redcoats came in sight of Khartoum on January 28, but heard that the city had fallen to the Mahdi two days before, and that Gordon had been killed. The Soudan was now abandoned, but Suakim was again occupied in force.

CHAPTER IV.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

1. IT remained for the Ministry to redeem a pledge which they had given on their accession to office, of reforming the representation of the people in Parliament by admitting the country labourers to the suffrage. Mr. Trevelyan had year after year brought forward a motion for assimilating the franchise in counties to that in boroughs. The new Bill added to the householder and lodger franchise already existing in boroughs a service franchise in favour of persons who occupied buildings without being either the owners or the tenants. These three classes of franchise were now introduced into the counties, the standard of the occupation franchise was reduced, and faggot votes were abolished. Scotland and Ireland were placed upon the same footing as England, although with respect to the latter country the step was strongly resisted by the Conservatives. In the Lords an amendment was proposed by Lord Cairns that the Bill should not come into operation until the scheme of redistribution which was to accompany it had been agreed upon. This was

The Franchise Bill.

accepted, and the Bill, which had been introduced on February 29, 1884, finally passed on December 5. It added about two millions of voters to the register.

2. After much discussion in the press and in the country, Mr. Gladstone produced his scheme of redistribution at the end of November. It had been drawn up in concert with Lord Salisbury, and its principal features were that it disfranchised a large number of small boroughs, established an almost uniform system of one-member constituencies, and slightly increased the numbers of the House of Commons. It was read a second time the day before the Franchise Bill became law, and its further consideration was adjourned till the following year. It was discussed in detail from March to June 1885, and did not become law until the Government which had introduced it had ceased to exist. This catastrophe was the result of an accident. The wear and tear of five eventful years had produced dissensions in the Liberal party, and an amendment on the Budget proposals of Mr. Childers was carried against the Government by a majority of twelve. Many Liberals were absent from the division, and thirty-nine Home Rulers voted for the Opposition. Mr. Gladstone resigned office.

Fall of the Ministry.

CONCLUSION.

AT the close of our period it may be well to review the results of the policy which we have described in detail, and to compare the condition of England in 1885 with its condition at the close of the great continental war. We will consider separately—1. Her population; 2. Her wealth; 3. The state of pauperism in the two periods; 4. The state of crime; 5. The condition of trade; 6. Food, education; 7. The extent of her dominion.

1. The population of Great Britain in 1811 was twelve millions; in 1885 it was twenty-nine millions and a half. At the first period she contained only nine per cent. of the whole population of the great powers of Europe, France, Germany, Austria, Russia. She now contains about thirteen per cent.

2. As an indication of wealth, in 1826 the United Kingdom paid £2 9*s.* 5*d.* a head for taxation. In 1885 she paid £2 1*s.* 7*d.* England is the only country in Europe in which the percentage of taxation in proportion to the population has diminished. The assessments to the income-tax in Great Britain in 1815 were a hundred and thirty millions; in 1885 they were six hundred and thirty-one millions and a half. In 1830 the deposits in savings banks amounted to 11*s.* 4*d.* per head of the population. In 1885 they amounted to £2 10*s.* 8*d.* per head.

3. In 1813 the amount spent in the relief of the poor was eight millions and a half; that is, a cost of 15*s.* 2*d.* per head of the population. In 1885 the amount spent was eight millions and a quarter, that is about 4*s.* 6*d.* per head; yet we spend nearly three times as much on each pauper as we did five and thirty years ago.

The percentage of paupers to the population is now slightly over two per cent.; at the close of the war it was more than eight per cent.

4. Crime has very largely diminished. The number of offences left undiscovered is probably much smaller than before. At the same time, the proportion of committals to the population is nearly one-half of what it was. While all kinds of serious crime have decreased, offences against property have diminished more than all.

5. The value of British exports was in 1820 thirty-six millions and a half, and in 1885 two hundred and thirteen millions. Inland trade has probably increased quite as much in proportion.

This period has seen an enormous growth in the cotton and iron trades. It has witnessed the entire development of the railway system. The total receipts from railway traffic are now sixty millions a year.

6. Besides all this, the people are much better fed than they used to be, and the duration of life has probably increased.

The development of the press has done as much for popular education as the measures especially devoted to that end. In 1846 there were in the United Kingdom 551 newspapers; in 1885 there were about 1,700.

7. In 1829 the population of the English Colonies was three millions and a quarter; in 1871 it was eleven millions and a half. At the same time, during the last hundred and thirty years we have conquered two million six hundred and fifty thousand square miles of territory, and nearly two hundred and fifty millions of people.

From these facts we may conclude that the England of the present day is incomparably stronger, happier, and better than England at the time of the Regency. Also *that not only* are Englishmen better fed, better taught *better governed, and* more united than they were,

that the nation is, for all purposes of offence and defence far stronger than it was at the time when it carried on the struggle against Napoleon.

These results are mainly due to the wisdom and patriotism of the statesmen who have controlled the destinies of the nation during the period we have described.

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